



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN RURAL MIDDLE SCHOOL – A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with parental involvement in rural middle school in term of students' enrollment, attendance, utilization of allotted funds and development of infrastructures. Case study method to study the involvement of the parents through school management committee towards school education in rural middle school was adopted by the investigator. First, functions, role and responsibilities of SMC were highlighted. Then involvement of parents through SMC in students' enrolment, students' attendance and in availability of infrastructure and teaching-learning process was studied. Finally, educational implications and suggestions were given for the smooth functioning of schools.

KEYWORDS: parental involvement; school management committee, middle School, RTE.

INTRODUCTION:

Parental involvement can be of three types: Parents as educators, parents as partners and parents as decision-makers. The RTE Act envisions parents to get involved as decision-makers with an objective to make teachers and principal more accountable for education delivery which in-turn would lead towards the better learning outcomes of students.

A community's members are a rich source of knowledge about their community and of energy and commitment to that community. Education policy makers all over the India have come to view community participation as an effective means of promoting primary education, in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Further, community participation and empowerment in decision making has commonly been understood and propagated as an attempt to counter act centralized actions. It is assumed that community participation and empowerment has the potential to make a major contribution towards living conditions as well as enriching their life styles through education. School management Committees (SMC) is constituted for the management of education at village level.

In India, policy on education prior to National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986 was rigid in itself. However, NPE of 1986 and the subsequent Plan of Action of 1992 showed consideration for a participatory approach in achieving the goals of Education for All (EFA). The participation of the community has also been highlighted by the recently enacted Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009, which calls for the constitution of School Management Committee (SMC), by pooling in the participation of the teachers, elected representatives of the local authorities, parents or guardians of children admitted in schools and local educationists. SMCs consist predominantly of parents along with teachers, local authorities and the school headmaster (Poornima, M; Palit, Sneha and Ranjan, Mitra ;2015)

Constitution of School Management Committees in Himachal Pradesh Under Section 21 of "The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009" (35/2009), the Government of Himachal Pradesh vide its notification No. EDN-C-F (10)-7/2010 dated 6th March, 2010 has issued orders regarding composition and functions of School Management Committees in all Government Primary and Middle schools and Government aided & unaided schools affiliated to Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education Dharmshala (HPBOSE).

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT THROUGH SMC

The process of constituting SMC could be as follows:

- General Body (GB) meeting of parents/guardians - all parents/guardians of children studying in the school will constitute the membership of the GB of the SMC.
- The GB members will elect representation of parents as per RTE norms for the executive committee of the SMC, by consensus or, if needed, by voting.
- Teachers and other members (1/3rd of the SMC) along with the elected members from the parents will constitute the Executive Committee of the SMC
- In turn they will elect office bearers of the SMC as per norms specified in the Act.
- The SMC can also constitute sub-committees including members from the GB for specific functions, and all these committees would be responsible

towards the GB of the SMC.

Functions of SMCs as per RTE Rules, 2010

In addition to the RTE provisions, the RTE Rules, 2009, states that the following functions should also be performed by SMC, along with the functions specified in the Act:

- communicate in simple and creative ways to the population in the neighborhood of the school, the rights of the child as enunciated in the Act; and the duties of the appropriate government, local authorities, school, parent and guardian;
- ensure the enrollment and attendance of all children, especially, the disadvantaged and weaker sections;
- ensure that weaker sections are not discriminated;
- facilitate non-enrolled children to participate in special training;
- monitor the identification and enrollment of children with special needs;
- ensure that the rights of children specified in the Act are met promptly and the basic
- provisions entitled to children are provided in a timely manner; prohibit private tuition or private teaching activity by teachers;
- monitor that teachers are not burdened with non-academic duties.

Role and Responsibilities of SMCs

Based on the provisions mentioned in the RTE Act and Rules, there are at least four major roles that the SMCs can play:

- All SMCs are management bodies created for the decentralized governance of the school to ensure that quality education is imparted to all categories of children, without discrimination. As a governance structure, SMCs are at the first level of the grievance redressed mechanism.
- SMCs can also be seen as a means of mobilizing community resources for the school-linking schools with the local community. The knowledge and skills available in the society can be transmitted to the school through the SMCs, and in turn, some constitutional values may be transferred to the society through children and school based activities.
- SMCs can create a sense of community ownership of school in their locality.
- They are a potential agent for systemic change, through the creation of pressure groups, in the form of federations

From the provisions, it is clear that the RTE Act has defined a clear role for community participation that aims to support systems of monitoring, developing school plans, and helping resolve local grievances. Parental involvement has great potential for removing mistrust and distance between people and schools through nurturing transparency of information and culture of mutual respect and for jointly pursuing improvement of schools by sharing vision, process, and

results. It should also be noted that individual and organizational behavioral changes are critical to increase the levels of participation. In countries where administrative structures are weak, the bottom-up approach to expanding educational opportunity and quality learning may be the only option. On the other hand, when community participation is implemented with a top-down manner without wider consultation on its aims, processes, and expected results, the consequences are likely to be conflicts between actors, a strong sense of overwhelming obligation, fatigue, and sabotage, disparity in the degree of participation and its results between communities, and political interference.

Yadav (1991) found that teachers fault for not meeting their parents for discussing their difficulties. Sarma (1992) found that parents' unawareness of the importance of education is the cause of non-enrolment and non-retention and guardian's non-cooperation or unawareness in the context of the teacher guardian relationship was another problem for non-enrollment. Kioko (2007) notes that school is an integral part of much wider community and that all members of the school are affected by what happens to the larger society. The society also expects a certain role from school such as developing certain attitudes and mental attributes which are necessary for the society's life. Bruns et al. (2011) noted that a combination of school autonomy, students' learning assessment, and accountability to parents and other stakeholders brought better learning performance by students. Kernel Teron (2012) in his study "To study the functioning of SMCs in Golaghat District of Assam" found that SMCs were formed as per guidelines, regular meetings were conducted, training was imparted to SMC members regarding their roles and functions and SMCs are serious about their meetings. Thus the present study was selected to know the status of the awareness level of the SMCs about their roles and functions and also to fill the gaps in the available researches on community participation in elementary education. In any role that community plays, be it substitute, complementary, or critical, the most important driving force is the demand for education from the side of a wider community (the school community). (Nishimura, 2014). In Senegal, a recent study that used a randomized control trial method reports that the impact of school grants was seen on French, mathematics, and oral reading test scores of Grade 3 students, especially on girls with high ability levels at baseline (Carneiro et al., 2015). Taniguchi and Hirakawa (2016) recently suggested some indirect positive relationship between community participation and learning achievements of pupils through improved school management in rural Malawi.

By going through these literatures, the investigator was very much anxious to know the role played by SMCs that operate in rural areas of Himachal. Because problems of non-enrolment and non-retention of children, lack of learning readiness, dropout and lack of proper environment and infrastructures are the major obstructs of elementary education in rural areas of the State. Hence, the investigators conducted the study on "Role of SMC in Rural MiddleSchool".

Table 2: Strength of Teachers

Name of Teachers	Age	Sex	Designation	Educational Qualification	Professional Qualification	Teaching Experience
No. of Students						
Smt. Meenakshi thakur	42 years	Female	Tgt (arts)	M.A	B.Ed.	18 years
Mrs anita kumari	48 years	Female	Drawing teacher	Matric	Diploma in Art and Craft	16 years
Smt. Renuka Chandel	38 years	Female	TGT(Non-Medical)	M.Sc.	M.Ed.	12 years
Anisha Warpa	30 years	Female	Shastri	M.A.	B.Ed.	3 years
Sh Vijay kumar	46 years	Male	pet	Matric	C.P.Ed.	16 years

Table 2 shows that there were five teachers for three classes. These numbers are satisfactory. That is govt. is taking seriously the education of rural school.

Table 3: Parental Involvement through School Management Committee (SMC)

In Chailly Middle School, the SMC was established in the year 2009.

The SMC consists of 11 members.

One advisor (Headmistress), one teacher representative, Ward member, one NGO member/health worker, one student representative, one cultural association member/educationist and other community members belonging to this committee.

Name of the persons holding different posts in the SMC are:

S.No.	Structure of SMC	Name
1.	(Advisor)	Smt. Meenakshi Thakur
2.	(Teacher representative)	Mrs Anita Kumari
3.	(Teacher representative)	Renuka Chandel
4.	(Teacher representative)	Anisha Warpa
5.	(Chairperson)	Sh Yashpal Thakur
6.	(Ward member)	Smt. Vimla
7.	(Student representative)	Abhishek

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

To study the parental involvement in rural middle school in different areas like enrollment and attendance, utilization of allotted funds and development of physical infrastructure.

METHODOLOGY:

Case study method to study the functioning of school management committee towards school education in rural middle school was adopted by the investigator. Govt. Middle School situated at Chailly under complex Govt. Senior Secondary School Summerhill Shimla, Himachal Pradesh was considered as the case for the study. All the SMC members, the headmaster and the students of the School were taken into consideration for collection of relevant data.

DATA COLLECTION:

Since investigator was also the part of the part of Govt. Middle School Chailly, so data was collected from different records such as attendance registers of students, SMC meeting register with the permission of the headmistress of the school. Further with the help of staff members, data was collected about four dimensions viz. Students' Enrolment, Attendance of students, Teaching learning process and Infrastructure of school.

TECHNIQUES OF DATA ANALYSIS:

In this study, the investigator collected the data through records and Interview with the Headmistress, staff and SMC Members. Data were analyzed by using qualitative data analysis technique of thick description from various sources.

RESULTS:

The results pertaining to parental involvement in rural middle school or functioning of SMC in rural middle school, with reference to universal enrollment, utilization of allotted funds and extension/ development of physical infrastructure are presented as follows:

The school is situated in chailly under complex govt. senior secondary school summerhill in shimla district.

Table 1: Class wise Enrollment Strength of Students

Class	Class-VI	Class-VII	Class-VIII
No. of Students	3	6	6

Table 1 depicts that out of 15 students; class-VI consisting of 3, 6 number of students constitute class-VII, class-VIII consists of 6 students. Enrollment in this school is not satisfactory. Maximum students are those who are from laborers' families.

Table 2: Strength of Teachers

8.	(SMC member)	Smt. Poonam
9.	(SMC member)	Smt. Kanta
10.	(SMC member)	Rama Sharma
11.	(SMC member)	Daya kumari

Table 3: Students Enrolment

Class	Class-VI		Class-VII		Class-VIII		Total		
	Years	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
No. of Students	3	10	6	3	6	6	15	19	

All the SMC members (100%) expressed that all the children in the age group of 10-14 have been enrolled in the school particularly from that locality and from laborer class families. Further, queries from the students during focus group discussion revealed that community members and teachers were regularly monitoring/ tracking the attendance in the school and subsequently communicating with parents of the students.

Furthermore, there is small hike of enrolment percent from previous year and 100% of SMC members responded that enrolment ratio has been increased from previous year i.e. four students were added to the total strength of all classes. This hike is not satisfactory.

Students Attendance:

All (100%) the SMC members expressed that they are familiar with students'

strength of the school and further, information regarding monitoring of regular attendance of students in class. Further, regarding information about causes of students' absence; All SMC members (100%) expressed that they tried to know the causes of students' absence. In this connection, one SMC member stated that "Students are not coming to school because of domestic responsibilities and helping the parents in their household work". About seventy percent (70%) of SMC members reported that they have monitored attendance of students in a class. They take steps for the students those were not regularly attending the classes; by conversation with parents, interaction with concerned students and neighbors.

Availability of Infrastructure and Teaching-Learning Process:

As high as (70%) of SMC members expressed that they were not satisfied with the infrastructure of the school and very few (30%) of SMC members reported that they were satisfied with the infrastructure of the school. Further investigation during focus group discussion with the students reported that all (100%) students were not satisfied with the existing infrastructure of the school. Regarding proper water supply facility in the school; cent percent (100%) of both SMC members and the students through focus group discussion expressed their views that school had proper water supply facility. All (100%) the SMC members indicated that government provided funds to the school. The SMC members reported that they invest money towards the school building, repairing and purchasing of teaching-learning resources.

Only sixty percent (60%) of SMC members expressed that they asked the children regarding their difficulties in learning. Further, data regarding the headmistress's invitation to community members to the school revealed that all SMC members viewed that the headmistress invited community members to the school to deliver speech or share experiences. All the SMC members reported that the school organized programmes in panchayatghar in a village time to time. Similarly cent percent of SMC members opined that the school prepared students for participation in various games and exhibitions. All the students detailed that the teachers make efforts to understand their problem; paying individual attentions to all categories of learners, use of various approaches for clarifying doubts during the interaction in the class.

FINDINGS:

These major findings related to the Functioning of SMC are as follows:

- All the SMC members agreed upon that the school has been preparing students for participation in various competitions and exhibitions.
- All the SMC members and students were not satisfied with the infrastructure of the school. All the SMC members have taken measures to extend the existing infrastructure of the school.
- The fund provided by Government was properly utilized for the development of the school but that was not sufficient towards to meet the demand of the school.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

The study findings would also make the newly appointed head teachers aware of the challenges they would encounter during management. Effectiveness of school management committee in essence refers to the ability in which its members are able to make use of the decision made within the available structures in place to accomplish its purpose by providing the intended results. It ensures that the decisions do not take too long to be made but rather issues affecting school are addressed as soon as possible.

The SMC is decision making authority should be involved in the process of planning for development of secondary education. SMC members should be well aware about their roles and responsibilities. Community members should take part in the school for smooth running of the school. They should involve in both curricular and co-curricular activities in the school. Meetings of SMCs must be conducted on a regular basis and should include discussion about participation of children and their access and retention in education as well as discussing funding and expenditure. Training programmes should be provided to the members of SMC in their locality. Meetings of SMC members should be on regular basis.

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